



4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program

Implementation Manual

Foreword

Like Most organizations across the United States, 4-H youth development needs highly skilled, knowledgeable workers. The 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship program provides an avenue for front line youth workers to gain the competencies they need to work in a variety of settings with young people.

This manual guides 4-H educators, staff development specialists, and 4-H state leaders in implementing the 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship program in their state. The process is laid out in step-by-step fashion, but each state should mold the details to fit their specific needs.

Youth work can be both exhilarating and exhausting and the competencies to do 4-H youth work can also be daunting. No one is expected to reach all competencies during a 2-3 year apprenticeship, however based on the successes of two years of the pilot program, youth workers participating in the 4-H Apprenticeship experience increased specific selected skills and abilities. Through the 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship program, the level of professionalism among front line youth workers across the 4-H system will be increased.

Table of Contents

- [The 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program](#)
- [The Apprenticeship Experience Process](#)
- [Benefits of the Program](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [How to Become an Apprenticeship State](#)
- [Role of Mentoring](#)
- [Master Practitioner Job Description](#)
- [Selection of Master Practitioners](#)
- [Apprentice Job Description](#)
- [Selection of Apprentices](#)
- [Related Instruction](#)
- [On-the-Job Learning](#)
- [Resources for Related Instruction and On-the-Job Learning](#)
- [Evaluating Program Effectiveness](#)
- [For More Information](#)

The 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program

The 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship program is an education and training program for 4-H youth workers¹. The two to three year Apprenticeship program includes related instruction (RI) and on-the-job learning (OJL), and a mentoring experience. Through these experiences, youth workers develop the skills they need to effectively serve youth in their communities. Apprentices earn their certificate while employed in the 4-H program in their state.

In cooperation with the State Department of Labor, the goals of the program are to:

- 1) Provide training standards for the youth development as a career;
- 2) Increase the number of youth workers receiving extensive, quality training;
- 3) Increase retention of youth workers and sustain youth programs;
- 4) Increase access to training and mentoring opportunities; and
- 5) Provide a career path and recognition of youth development as a credible field

“When I first started, it was nerve wracking, but the Apprenticeship program gave me the confidence I needed...” - Apprentice

The Apprenticeship Experience Process

Apprentices usually take 2-3 years to complete the program, and most learning occurs while they are working in a 4-H youth development program. Apprentices work through the three parts of the program simultaneously. These three aspects blend together to form a well-rounded and meaningful learning experience for each Apprentice:

- On-the-job learning (OJL):
 - The Apprentice demonstrates specific skills in real-life situations and programs.
- Related instruction (RI):
 - The Apprentice uses various resources to build his/her knowledge of specific youth development competencies.
- Mentoring
 - The Apprentice maintains a consistent one-on-one relationship with a Master Practitioner. The state coordinator (usually a staff development specialist or other state 4-H staff) matches an Apprentice with a mentor.

Note to implementers:

There are at least two ways to approach the Apprenticeship program. Participants can work towards obtaining a certificate, or they may complete portions of the program most applicable to them. The RI and OJL hours suggested in this manual are standards set forth by the US Department of Labor (DOL) for apprenticeships in order to earn the certificate and designation as a “journey worker.”

¹ A youth worker is an individual who works with or on behalf of youth to facilitate their personal, social, and educational development and enable them to gain a voice, influence, and place in society as they make the transition from dependence to independence.

The Benefits of the Program

Benefits to the individual:

- Training and development opportunities
- Increased sense of professional competency
- Easier access to related instruction resources [aligned with the 4-H PRKC (Professional Research, Knowledge, and Competency) model (2004)]
- Support and guidance from an experienced Master Practitioner
- Recognition of accomplishment through the State Department of Labor certification, state 4-H program in cooperation with CSREES, USDA
- Potential for career advancement opportunities

“Participating in the Apprenticeship program rekindled the fundamental principles that I use every day.”
- Master Practitioner

Benefits to the state:

- Increased knowledge and skills for the Apprentice and Master Practitioner that lead to positive youth outcomes
- Increased professional opportunities for Apprentices and Master Practitioner
- Increased ability to recruit prospective youth workers
- Creditability to funders
- Opportunity to build the field of youth development nationally
- Increased credibility and prestige for Cooperative Extension 4-H

Glossary

Apprentice

4-H youth workers that participates in the 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship program. The program is targeted to 4-H youth workers, usually early in their career (up to 3-5 years); may include someone with extensive experience in a non-youth area who has been reassigned or has chosen to enter the youth development field; may also include an extension specialist or program specialist with little or limited youth experience, but with youth work job responsibilities. See “Apprentice Job Descriptions” in this manual.

Master Practitioner

Individuals that have worked as a 4-H youth worker for 5 or more years, and are currently or have been highly successful at the local level. Master Practitioners agree to volunteer a minimum of one hour per week via phone, e-mail, or in face-to-face meetings as a mentor. See “Master Practitioner Job Descriptions” in this manual.

State contact

The individual that provides administrative and programmatic support, usually from the state 4-H office. The responsibilities of the state contact are to: work with department of labor contact within each state to register Apprentices for certification; communicate with National 4-H Headquarters, CSREES; facilitate the selection process; and implement the program.

Related instruction

The educational experiences (trainings, workshops, courses) based on core competencies for youth development professionals in which Apprentices participate. These are based on the 4-H Professional Research, Knowledge, and Competency Model (PRKC, 2004) and suggestions

from the State Department of Labor. The total required number of hours of related instruction is 345 to earn the “journey worker” certification.

On-the-job learning

On-the-job learning (OJL) supplements the related instruction requirements. Apprentices are required to complete 3,000 – 4,000 hours of OJL in order to be certified. During OJL, Apprentices will demonstrate their professional knowledge in several areas, including program design and delivery; assessment and individual planning; and communication with youth, the community, and employers.

Certification

Upon completion of both related instruction and OJT, 4-H Youth Development Apprentices can be certified by the state and federal Department of Labor as a youth practitioner/journey worker. Apprenticeships typically require 2-3 years to complete the required number of RI and OJL hours.

How to Become an Apprenticeship State

To establish the 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship program in your state, use the following steps as guidelines:

Communication

1. Establish a state contact person for administrative and programmatic support, particularly communication.
2. Identify potential Apprentices and Master Practitioners. Has your organization hired any new assistants or educators who would benefit from this program? List experienced 4-H educators who might be interested in investing in the next generation of youth workers. Contact people from both lists to gauge interest.
3. Determine if the potential participants meet program qualifications. See “Selection of Apprentices” and “Selection of Master Practitioners”. You may adapt the requirements to meet the specific needs of your state.
4. Explore sources for related instruction in your state. What professional development opportunities already exist, and where do they fit into the syllabus for related instruction? What sources are lacking that may need to be created? Check with other states to see if they have resources you can benefit from.
5. Contact your state’s Department of Labor (DOL) for their specific requirements for submission to be recognized as an official apprenticeship program in your state. The U.S. Department of Labor has approved the 4-H Apprenticeship program officially on a national level, but certificates of completion (naming the Apprentice as an official “journey worker”) are issued on the state level. Your state may have specific requirements for the program, such as when and what they would like submitted as proof that the Apprentice has completed the program. *Establish a contact person at the state level to help you navigate the Department of Labor requirements and establish the official program and navigate their requirements.*
 - a. State office contacts for apprenticeship training:
http://www.doleta.gov/atels_bat/stateoffices.cfm
6. Establish a contact at your university or Extension Human Resources office, and establish any specific state guidelines for program implementation. You may also need their help obtaining signatures for the State Department of Labor.

7. Submit all required materials to the state Apprenticeship Council or Board at the State Department of Labor. (This process may take several months, but you can begin your program before all of the paperwork is completed.)

Beginning the Program

1. Market the program broadly as well as to specifically targeting potential Apprentices and Master Practitioners. The most effective strategy is to contact people and invite them personally to participate in the program. To ensure the success of the program's completion, emphasize the time commitment the program requires.
2. Match Apprentices to Master Practitioners. Suggestions include:
 - a. Ideally, match an Apprentice to a Master Practitioner in a neighboring county so that they are close enough to meet regularly but not involved in the same county.
 - b. Avoid matching an Apprentice to their supervisor.
3. Although it is not required, creating a cohort offers a great advantage for all participants. Apprentices can share ideas, lessons learned, and encouragement. Master Practitioners can offer suggestions for being most effective as they work with the Apprentices with each other as well. Consider bringing the group together 2-3 times a year to foster communication and offer related instruction as a group.
4. Establish, communicate, and reinforce consistent requirements for all Apprentices:
 - a. Standards of record keeping – How detailed should Apprentices' records need to be?
 - b. System of reporting progress to the state level – How often should Apprentices submit records? What do they report to the Master Practitioner and what do they submit to the state contact?
 - c. Standards for receiving credit for prior experience/learning – Apprentices can receive up to a certain amount of hours for prior experience or learning, such as college classes or job skills already in practice before they began the program. This credit encourages the Apprentice to begin the program confidently because they have already made progress toward their goal. Establish state requirements on what Apprentices must do to prove their prior learning and/or experiences.
 - d. Determine what decisions will be made on the state level and what decisions you will leave to Master Practitioners. Master Practitioners can make decisions that will affect their specific apprentice, but there must be a balance with the need for consistency across the state.
5. Offer a kick-off training session for Apprentices and Master Practitioners. Establish a team spirit through group activities, and encourage Apprentices to keep in contact with one another. Provide learning experiences to help Apprentices accomplish a few of their related instruction hours.
6. Build support from the state 4-H youth professionals association and state Extension service. Acknowledge the value of the program and ask for their support of the time and effort needed to build a skilled youth development workforce to sustain an effective mentoring relationship between Apprentices and Master Practitioners. Build financial support to help Apprentices reach their RI and OJL goals, encourage travel to professional development events, and promote the Apprenticeship program as a valuable piece of the state 4-H program.

Maintenance

1. Keep your State Department of Labor contact person informed of progress.
2. Consistently evaluate the progress of apprentices. Are they finding resources for related instruction? Is the Master Practitioner able to provide enough time for his/her Apprentice?

3. Communicate to National 4-H Headquarters how the program is going, obstacles you have overcome, and suggestions for improving the program.
4. Look for opportunities to recognize and acknowledge the Apprentices and Master Practitioners. Keep the program visible across the state with the NAE4-HA state association and with Extension partners.
5. When Apprentices have completed their required hours, hold a ceremony to recognize their accomplishments and to officially present their certificates.

Role of Mentoring

A mentor is defined as “an experienced and trusted advisor” - someone who commits to helping another on a critical role of voluntary basis. With this definition in mind the Master Practitioner was created to support the Apprentice 4-H youth worker. The role involves communicating, setting goals, choosing activities, celebrating accomplishments, learning to know limits, remaining committed, expanding possibilities, and starting again. This role is critical to the Apprenticeship program

“We spent most of our time together on the telephone – some face to face. We got together to discuss more specific topics.”
- Master Practitioner

A 4-H Youth Development job can be complex and demanding. It requires specific knowledge about a wide range of subjects, as well as interpersonal skills and abilities

with a variety of settings and age groups. The 4-H worker is often called upon to solve problems and resolve difficulties. Given this reality, the Master Practitioner role provides an experienced colleague with whom the Apprentice can seek counsel and discuss possibilities for making a positive impact. See Appendix for articles on mentoring.

Master Practitioner Job Description

Purpose of Job

- To serve as a supervisor, advisor and role model in support of an apprentice. Each Master Practitioner (MP) will work with one apprentice.
- To assist with the development of the Apprenticeship program as it evolves by providing input and feedback to the state contact.

Role of Master Practitioner

- Offer support and assistance in the development of the Apprentice's career in youth development
- Provide experience-based advice
- Work to establish an on-going relationship with the Apprentice
- Provide performance feedback and direction for the Apprentice

Responsibilities

Master Practitioners are expected to:

- Conduct a face-to-face contact with the Apprentice to initiate the apprenticeship;
- Make contact with Apprentices a minimum of 4 times each month via phone, email, or face-to-face meetings (a minimum of 2-4 hours of contact time per month);
- Document monthly meetings and progress;
- Participate in occasional conference calls with Apprentice's state contact, your state contact and/or other MPs to discuss progress of the program;
- Assist the Apprentice in developing and implementing the related instruction and On-the-Job-learning plan;
- Serve as a resource for the Apprentice in finding and selecting appropriate educational materials;
- Discuss and provide support and guidance in dealing with issues and challenges that occur in the workplace; and
- Familiarize Apprentices with the unique characteristics, resources, and policies in 4-H Youth Development and Cooperative Extension.

Time Commitment

- Participation in Master Practitioner orientation (to be determined by the state contact)
- Weekly contact with Apprentice (2-4 hours per month)
- Monthly evaluation, i.e., journaling and data input (1-2 hours per month)
- Participation in training for the Apprenticeship program
- Commitment to provide support and direction to Apprentices for the duration of the apprenticeship (typically 2-3 years)

Qualifications

- Flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity
- Willingness to share wisdom from personal experiences with a new youth development worker
- Participation in the Master Practitioner orientation
- Minimum of five years working at the county level in the 4-H youth development program
- Currently working at the county level
- Currently or willing to become a member of the national and state 4-H associations
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Exceptional planning and organizing skills
- Willingness to assist others develop skills and knowledge
- Commitment to provide support and direction to Apprentices for the duration of the apprenticeship (typically 2-3 years)
- Tolerant and respectful of individual differences
- Ability to effectively balance personal and professional commitments
- Willingness to be a role model

Benefits

- Satisfaction gained from supporting the personal and professional development of an Apprentice
- Opportunity to meet and learn from fellow Master Practitioners and other professionals
- Potential for developing rewarding professional contacts
- Enhancement of problem solving, leadership and interpersonal skills
- Opportunity to develop management and advising techniques

- Participation in creating a new system that will improve the quality of the youth development field nationwide
- Enhancement of the extension 4-H profession as Master Practitioners

Selection of Master Practitioners

The selection of the 4-H Youth Development Master Practitioner is determined by each state. Selection considerations include:

Strong aptitude for helping others through a mentoring situation

The program requires that the Master Practitioner make a long-term commitment to mentor and assist the professional development of another person. This demands time and energy, dedication, and willingness to assess performance and provide positive feedback. The ability to listen, share experiences, and develop a problem-solving capability in the Apprentice is central to a successful match. The Master Practitioner must serve as a strong role model for professionalism, teaching, and programming.

Willingness to Learn

The Master Practitioner is also a learner in this program. Although they may be seasoned professionals, Master Practitioners have cited the fact that they have all learned along with the Apprentices. Apprentices give a fresh perspective to programming, and their enthusiasm is contagious.

Demonstrated knowledge and capacity regarding the 4-HPRKC Model

The Master Practitioner assists the Apprentice to systematically assess and connect their professional development needs to the competencies outlined in the 4-HPRKC Model. The

“I felt responsible for my apprentice’s success.”
- Master Practitioner

Master Practitioner and Apprentice jointly develop and implement a plan for enhancing knowledge and skills. The Master Practitioner helps identify and interpret useful resources that support learning. Periodic reporting of progress is required, and the Master Practitioner assesses and documents Apprentice progress.

Strong support exists from colleagues at their work site

The program requires time for regular and unplanned contacts with the Apprentice. The Master Practitioner usually serves out of a sense of altruism. It is important for those who supervise and work with the Master Practitioner to understand and value this role.

Apprentice Job Description

Time Commitment

Apprenticeships take approximately 2-3 years to complete, based on an average of 3 hours of related instruction and 40 hours of On-the-job Learning (OJL) per week.

Apprenticeship Requirements

- 345 hours of related instruction, based on youth development practitioner core competencies
- 3,000-4,000 hours of OJL
- Participation in face-to-face trainings as scheduled

Qualifications

- Employed in the 4-H Youth Development program by the date the apprenticeship begins (usually, but not necessarily early career)
- Interest in 4-H Youth Development as a lifelong career
- Member is willing to become a member of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4HA)
- Self-motivated and willing to learn
- Committed to the Apprenticeship program
- Willing to complete required paperwork for certification
- Willing to travel to attend meetings and conferences
- Willing to spend a minimum of 2-4 hours per month with Master Practitioner (via phone, email or face-to-face)
- High school diploma or GED
- Minimum of 18 years of age

Benefits

- Formal, structured training and development opportunities
- Support and supervision from a Master Practitioner
- Earn while you learn
- Career advancement opportunities
- Increased sense of professional competency

Selection of Apprentices

The selection of participants in the 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program is determined by each state. The program offers an opportunity to earn a youth development professional certification from the State Department of Labor as a 4-H youth development professional. The investment of time is substantial and requires dedication, willingness to learn, and motivation from the individual. Selection considerations include:

Interest in professional development without the need for an advanced degree

The program offers systematic professional development opportunities based on the 4-H

"I'm a program assistant, so I do the many of the same things as youth educators. It made me more aware of what I do and how it affects coworkers. You can develop your programs around the competencies." - Apprentice

Professional Research, Knowledge, and Competency Model (4-HPRKC). Related instruction and on-the-job learning are primarily structured at the youth worker's place of employment and in their community. This program eliminates a requirement to enroll in a degree-granting program. (It is possible some Apprentices will use formal credit courses to meet the related instruction needed for certification. Some Apprentices may already have advanced degrees, but wish to be involved in the

Apprenticeship program to strengthen their capacity in the field of youth development.)

Support at the youth worker's job site for staff professional development

The program requires time for planning, utilizing resources, and application of principles learned in related instruction. The Apprentice is expected to understand and use components described in the six domains of the 4-HPRKC model. This includes the expectation to create or adapt programs that can be implemented in the work place using best practices.

Funds for travel and registration fees for learning experiences and other related instruction costs will vary widely depending upon the resources and support available in each state and job site.

Participation from under-represented populations

The Apprenticeship Program offers a gateway to the 4-H youth development profession as a career opportunity for those who may have had less opportunity or exposure to such a possibility.

Related Instruction

Related instruction is the learning aspect of the program. Apprentices are required to accomplish 345 hours of instruction, which is assigned to various domains within the 4-H Professional Research Knowledge and Competencies model (4-H PRKC, 2004). The 4-H PRKC describes the knowledge, skills, and competencies essential for 4-H youth development professionals. Apprentices can meet these requirements through reading books, online studies, workshops, and other opportunities. Required hours are assigned as follows:

- Domain A: Youth Development – 90 hours
- Domain B: Youth Program Development – 80 hours
- Domain C: Volunteerism – 75 hours
- Domain D: Equity, Access and Opportunity – 30 hours
- Domain E: Partnerships – 30 hours
- Domain F: Organizational Systems – 40 hours

On-the-Job Learning

On-the-job learning (OJL) is also based on the 4-H PRKC (2004) and matches with related instruction hours. OJL gives Apprentices the opportunities to put their skills into practice. For example, they can accomplish OJL through developing and implementing their own programs, working with volunteers, and performing evaluations. Master Practitioners usually require their Apprentices to write a short summary of their experiences and what they learned to earn their hours of credit.

Although the number of hours may seem overwhelming, Apprentices can count their hours if they are participating in a legitimate learning experience while “on the clock”. They can also gain credit for past experiences. Some states may choose to allow Apprentices to double count hours if an activity falls into more than one domain. Required hours are as follows:

- Domain A: Youth Development – 300-500 hours
- Domain B: Youth Program Development – 850-1050 hours
- Domain C: Volunteerism – 550-750 hours
- Domain D: Equity, Access and Opportunity – 400-500 hours
- Domain E: Partnerships – 450-550 hours
- Domain F: Organizational Systems – 550-850 hours

“It has given the community more belief in me because I’m not from a youth background. I am learning how to work with youth.”
- Apprentice

Resources for Related Instruction and On-the-Job Learning

Apprentices and Master Practitioners will find many resources available to supplement related instruction and On-the-Job Learning requirements. One primary source is the Bibliography of Related Instruction Resources. It contains curriculum pieces pertinent to 4-H youth development that have been jury reviewed and researched based. The bibliography has been referenced to the Domain, Topic, Component, and Competency format of the 4-H PRKC Model (2004).

Other suggested resources include:

- In-services offered by states and regions
- Courses at colleges and technical schools
- Web-based tutorials/classes
- Community offered training
- Workshops
- Conferences and Symposia
- Satellite and other technology based offerings
- CDs
- Adventure based learning
- Books/tapes/videos
- Field trips and visits to sites doing similar work
- Interviews and discussions with colleagues and specialists
- Self-directed study

The Master Practitioner's knowledge and experience is also a fundamental resource that should be utilized by the Apprentice.

Evaluating Program Effectiveness

Although the 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship program is a national program, each state has authority over their individual program. The state coordinator should evaluate the program in his/her state to meet organizational requirements and determine the effectiveness of the program.

Reporting

A system of reporting the progress of Apprentices should be determined by each state. Apprentices must submit certain reports or other proof of their accomplishments on a specific timetable. The State Department of Labor may also have certain requirements for reporting.

Apprentices should be encouraged to keep their records up to date. Reporting is often the most difficult aspect of the apprenticeship experience, but it is the documentation that will help them obtain their certificate. Some Apprentices are simply required to show documentation to their Master Practitioner; others must send reports to the state level. Ensure that your standards match the requirements of the State Department of Labor and are uniformly enforced.

National Evaluation

At this time, National 4-H Headquarters, CSREES, USDA, simply requires an informal, bi-annual report on program progress. Communicate to National 4-H Headquarters about successes, difficulties, and improvements made in the program. You may be contacted periodically to assist other states in starting an Apprenticeship program. National 4-H Headquarters may ask you to participate in a national evaluation of the Apprentice program.

“It provides validity to your 4-H program. You feel more confident, your supervisor sees you growing, and so it has an impact on your job evaluation.” - Apprentice

For more information, contact:

Barbara Stone
National Program Leader, Professional Development
National 4-H Headquarters
Families, 4-H, and Nutrition
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA
202-720-5345
bstone@csrees.usda.gov

Manual written and edited by Jim Barthel, Mary Katherine Deen, Shannon H. Bedo, and Barbara Stone (May, 2005). Appreciation is expressed to Lisa Sotak, National 4-H Headquarters, CSREES for review and editing the document.